

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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COMIDEASTFOR

USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 12500

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET FT FR OAU

SUBJ: ALI AREF TELLS OAU TFAIR SEEKS INDEPENDENCE

REF: ADDIS 12324 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ALI AREF BOURHAN, PRESIDENT OF TFAI TERRITORIAL
GOVERNMENT, TOLD OAU ADMIN SEC GEN, HIS TOP STAFFERS, AND
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OAU'S GENERAL POLICY AND INFORMATION (GPI) COMMITTEE

OCT 20 THAT HE IS SEEKING TFAI'S INDEPENDENCE BY PEACEFUL MEANS; IS PREPARING PUBLICLY TO PRESENT HIS INDEPENDENCE POLICY TO THE TFAI TERRITORIAL ASSEMBLY IN NOVEMBER TO SEEK ITS ENDORSEMENT AND THAT OF THE PEOPLE OF TFAI. HE SAID HE HOPED TO ENLIST "ALL TENDENCIES" UNDER HIS BANNER AND TO SECURE ADEQUATE GUARANTEES FOR AN INDEPENDENT TFAI FROM ITS NEIGHBORS AND THE OAU.

1. THE VISIT TO ETHIOPIA OF THE TFAI DEL HEADED BY ALI AREF BOURHAN IS CONTINUING. WE WILL REPORT ON ITS SALIENT BILATERAL ASPECTS UPON ITS CONCLUSION. THIS MESSAGE DEALS WITH ITS MULTILATERAL (OAU) ASPECT AND IS THE RESULT OF OCT 21 CONVERSATIONS WITH OAU ADMIN SEC GEN WILLIAM ETEKI M'BOUMOUA, OAU A/SEC GEN ELPHAS OSANYA-NYYNEQUE AND (CAMEROON) AMBASSADOR EL HADJ MAHMOUDOU HAMAN DICKO, DEAN OF THE ADDIS DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE OAU'S GENERAL POLICY AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE. THESE SOURCES SHOULD BE PROTECTED. THE EMBASSY CONSIDERS THEIR STATEMENTS AUTHORITATIVE.

2. ACCORDING DICKO ALI AREF APPEARED BEFORE OAU'S GPI COMMITTEE ON OCT 20. HE INFORMED THE COMMITTEE THAT HE INTENDED TO LEAD THE TFAI TO INDEPENDENCE. HE SAID HE WOULD MAKE HIS POSITION PUBLIC BY LAYING HIS POLICY BEFORE THE TERRITORIAL ASSEMBLY FOR ITS APPROVAL IN NOVEMBER. HE WOULD ALSO SEEK THE SUPPORT OF "ALL TENDENCIES" AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE TFAI'S PEOPLE BY MEANS OF A REFERENDUM. ASSUMING TFAI ASSEMBLY APPROVAL AND PUBLIC SUPPORT, THE RESULTS WOULD THEN BE PUT BEFORE THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT FOR "RATIFICATION". ALI AREF CONTINUED THAT HE IS ALREADY SEEKING GUARANTEES FOR AN INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI FROM ITS NEIGHBORS. ETHIOPIA HAD MADE ITS POSITION CLEAR IN A SATISFACTORY MANNER. SOMALIA, ALI AREF HOPED, WOULD BE JUST AS EXPLICIT. IN DUE COURSE HIS COUNTRY WOULD WISH TO JOIN THE OAU, ACCEPT THE OBLIGATIONS OF ITS CHARTER AND BENEFIT FROM THE GUARANTEES INHERENT THEREIN.

3. THE OAU GPI COMMITTEE UNDERTOOK TO INFORM THE AFRICAN LIBERATION COMMITTEE (ALC) IN DAR OF ALI AREF'S PROGRAM. THE ALC WOULD DELIBERATE THEREON AND REPORT ITS CONCLUSIONS
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TO THE NEXT OAU CM. ALI AREF WAS REQUESTED TO TRANSMIT HIS PROGRAM IN WRITING TO THE ALC PRIOR TO ITS PUBLIC PRESENTATION AND UNDERTOOK TO DO SO.

4. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTIONS, OAU ADMIN SEC GEN ETEKI PRO-
NOUNCED HIMSELF AS ENCOURAGED BY ALI AREF'S PRESENTATION. THE OAU'S OBJECTIVE WAS AND REMAINS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF TFAI'S INDEPENDENCE BY WHATEVER MEANS. TO BE SURE, ALI

AREF'S PRESENTATION WAS NOT IN AND OF ITSELF SUFFICIENT REASON FOR OAU TO CEASE SUPPORTING THE EXISTING DJIBOUTI LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. HOWEVER, IF ALI AREF COULD ENLIST THEM UNDER HIS BANNER SO MUCH THE BETTER. AFTER INDEPENDENCE, ANY DIFFERENCES SUBSISTING BETWEEN THEM WOULD BECOME A DOMESTIC MATTER BEYOND THE OAU'S PURVIEW.

5. OAU A/SEC GEN NYNEQUE NOTED THAT A TOP LEVEL AD HOC SECRETARIAT GROUP HAD CAREFULLY QUESTIONED ALI AREF ON HIS PROGRAM BEFORE ARRANGING FOR THE GPI COMMITTEE TO HEAR HIM. IN NYNEQUE'S VIEW THERE SEEMED TO BE THREE PROBLEM AREAS FACING ALI AREF: (A) NATIONAL GUARANTEES; (B) HIS POLITICAL FUTURE, VIZ., DIVERGENT POLITICAL TENDENCIES" AND (C) THE RATIFICATION OF THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT.

6. ON GUARANTEES, NYNEQUE SAID THAT ACCORDING TO ALI AREF THE ETHIOPIANS HAD BEEN SATISFACTORILY FORTHCOMING BOTH AT THE KAMPALA OAU CM AND IN PRIVATE. THE SOMALIS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD MERELY GIVEN LIP SERVICE TO TFAI SELF-DETERMINATION AT KAMPALA, "LEAVING A SENSE OF UNCERTAINTY OF THEIR TRUE POSITION" ON AN INDEPENDENT TFAI. THE SOMALI AMBASSADOR, WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE ADDIS OAU HQ SESSION WITH ALI AREF, HAD ESSENTIALLY REITERATED HIS GOVT'S KAMPALA LINE, LEAVING THE SAME FLAVOR OF AMBIGUITY. (IT WAS NOT EVEN MADE CLEAR FOR EXAMPLE WHETHER THE AMBASSADOR HAD OR HAD NOT SPOKEN ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE GDSR). CLEARLY, SOMALI "GUARANTEES" WOULD BE ESSENTIAL. ALI AREF DID NOT MENTION "ARAB" OR RED SEA RIPARIAN GUARANTEES, ACCORDING TO NYNEQUE.

7. ON "TENDENCIES" ALI AREF'S SUCCESS IN ENLISTING THE INTERNAL AND FOREIGN BASED OPPOSITION TO HIS REGIME IN THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE UNDER HIS BANNER REMAINS TO BE DEMONSTRATED.

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STRATED. IT SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT BOTH ETHNIC (ISSA) AND POLITICAL (GSDR/EPMG) FACTORS WOULD INFLUENCE THE RESPONSES OF THE "TENDENCIES" TO ALI AREF'S APPROACH.

8. FRENCH RATIFICATION, NYNEQUE THOUGHT, IS LIKELY ALREADY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE. THE GOF WOULD, OF COURSE, AUTHORIZE THE REFERENDUM. HOWEVER, ALI AREF SEEMED TO ENVISAGE A 13-MONTH PERIOD OF TRANSITION TO FULL INDEPENDENCE (NOV '76). IN SO DOING HE WAS APPARENTLY BASING HIMSELF ON RATHER LEGALISTIC CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT'S LEGISLATIVE SCHEDULE, ETC. GIVEN THE MOMENTUM OF EVENTS, THIS COULD PROVE UNREALISTIC. A TELESOPING OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD, ON THE OTHER HAND, COULD ENTAIL PRESENTLY UNFORESEEN COMPLICATIONS WHICH COULD FACE THE FRENCH WITH MORE DIFFICULT DECISIONS.

9. COMMENT: THE TFAIR DECOLONISATION ISSUE IS ABOUT TO SURFACE PUBLICLY. WHATEVER THE FEELINGS IN ETHIOPIA, SOMALIA OR OAU ABOUT ALI AREF'S PAST POLITICAL ROLE, HIS ESPOUSAL OF INDEPENDENCE FOR TFAIR CANNOT BE OPPOSED FRONTALLY BY ANY FACTION. ON OTHER HAND IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER IN THE FACE OF CONFLICTING PERSONAL AMBITIONS (HASSAN GOULED) AND NATIONAL INTERESTS (SOMALIA/ETHIOPIA), ALI AREF EVEN WITH DISCREET GOF SUPPORT -- THIS IS THE FIRST TIME ANY TFAIR CHIEF HAS BEEN PERMITTED THIS DEGREE OF INITIATIVE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS -- CAN STAY THE COURSE.
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